



blm - alaska

frontiers

managing public lands for multiple use

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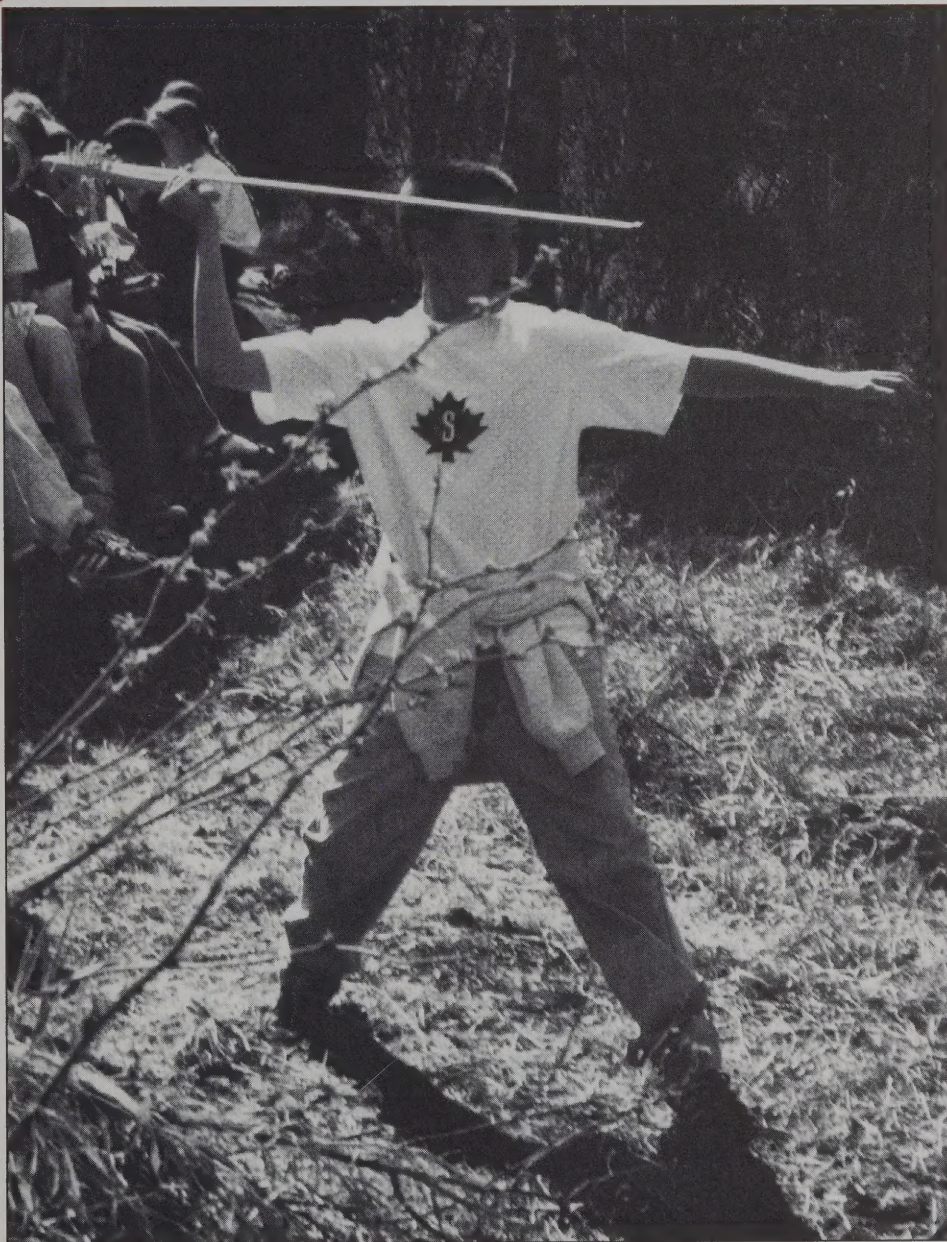
I N S I D E

Proposed subsistence regulations may bring federal and state rules closer to agreement

It's for the birds!
A surprising number of species make Carter Spit home in the summer

From the village life to corporate headquarters—new RAPS coordinator bridges two different worlds

BLM's Reinvention Lab: it may save taxpayer dollars and speed up the Native Allotment process



Janet Malone

A local sixth grade student throws a spear as part of the 22nd annual Outdoor Week, sponsored by the BLM Anchorage District Office and the Anchorage School District. Specialists from government agencies and organizations conducted environmental learning activities for almost 3,000 sixth graders in May. Students also tried their luck at panning for gold in the waters of Campbell Creek and learning how to tie fishing flies.

When traditions become politics

—No easy answers to the subsistence question in Alaska



In 10 public hearings from Ketchikan to Kotzebue during May, Alaska residents commented on possible changes to federal subsistence regulations that will expand the federal government's control of subsistence management in the state. In most meetings, emotions ran high. People expressed two distinct opinions: rural residents and Native organizations favored federal management; state government and most urban hunters and fishermen say game management and subsistence rights are a state responsibility. The bulk of the testimony has been in favor of federal management, according to BLM subsistence coordinator Peggy Fox.

The hearings were held to obtain public opinion about suggested federal regulations before they are formally proposed. The comments will be considered by the Federal Subsistence Board as it proposes permanent changes to federal subsistence regulations this fall. The Board will hold another round of public hearings to obtain comments on these proposed rules.

Subsistence is a household word in Alas-

ka, although not everyone outside the state understands this specific use of the word and how it affects state residents and fish and game management regulations.

At the heart of the issue is an impasse over how to resolve differences between the Alaska Constitution and federal law. Alaska is the only state in the union facing this quandary. The Alaska Constitution gives *all residents* equal rights to state resources—including wild game and fish.

Title VIII of the Alaska National Interest Land Conservation Act (ANILCA), passed in 1980, gives *rural residents*, Native and non-Native, priority for subsistence taking of fish and wildlife on federal public lands. The federal government has been urging the State of Alaska for several years to change its laws to reflect the ANILCA subsistence requirements.

In 1989, the Alaska Supreme Court decided in *McDowell v. State of Alaska* that the rural preference contained in the state's subsistence statute violated the Alaska Constitution. This ruling put the state's subsistence program out of compliance with Title VIII of ANILCA, and resulted in the Secretaries of Interior and Agriculture assuming subsistence management on federal public lands in Alaska.

Temporary subsistence management regulations were published in 1990 as the federal government established an inter-agency subsistence program to give rural residents priority in harvesting subsistence resources on federal public lands in Alaska. Final rules were published in 1992. The current changes being considered would modify those 1992 final rules, expanding federal jurisdiction for subsistence to many navigable waters within the state.

The Bureau of Land Management is one of five federal land management agencies with responsibility for subsistence management in Alaska. Others are the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the USDA Forest Service, the National Park Service, and the Bureau of

Indian Affairs. The statewide heads of each of these agencies, along with a representative of the Secretary of the Interior, make up the Federal Subsistence Board, which makes regulations governing the taking and use of wildlife and fish for subsistence purposes.

When the State legislature didn't resolve the conflict between federal law and the Alaska constitution, and closed several subsistence fisheries, Katie John—an Athabaskan Indian and member of the Ahtna Native Corporation in Interior Alaska—began a six-year legal fight to regain fishing rights as promised in ANILCA. John gave testimony at the Fairbanks hearing, saying, "... I was raised on the land. I wanted to get back my fishing rights so I started fighting ... I'm fighting for my children and grandchildren."

A 1995 ruling by the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals on the "Katie John" case extended federal management to subsistence fishing in *some navigable Alaska waters*. These include navigable waters in which Congress reserved the water rights on portions of waterways that flow within the boundaries of designated federal management areas (national wildlife refuges; national parks, monuments and preserves; national forests; national wild and scenic rivers; and national recreation and conservation areas) in Alaska. Early this May, the U.S. Supreme Court refused, without comment, to hear the state's appeal of the Katie John case, leaving the 9th Circuit Court decision intact.

In response to that court ruling, the Department of the Interior, in consultation with the Department of Agriculture, drafted proposed changes to subsistence regulations that affect three distinct but related issues.

NAVIGABLE WATERS AND SUBSISTENCE FISHING

One complication of management is on navigable waters—those waterways suitable or used for travel, trade and commerce. Just as in every other state in the union, at statehood the federal government relinquished jurisdiction of all navigable waters in Alaska, even those that flow through federally managed lands, to the State. Current federal subsistence management includes only *non-*

navigable waters within federal public land boundaries, as well as *some navigable waters* over lands that were reserved by the United States prior to Alaska's statehood, such as the 23-million-acre National Petroleum Reserve in Alaska on the North Slope.

In the case of a national wild and scenic river, the riverbed and water column is managed by the state, and the land within the designated corridor on either side of the river is managed by a federal agency. If the proposed changes become final, the federal government will manage navigable waters flowing within federal land boundaries.



LIMITED EXTENSION OF CONTROL TO NON-FEDERAL PUBLIC LANDS

This provision would extend the federal government's jurisdiction over the taking of fish and wildlife on non-federally managed lands to ensure priority for subsistence uses on federal public lands. The Federal Subsistence Board would have the authority to regulate hunting, fishing and trapping activities occurring on *non-federal* lands if the Board decided that such activities were interfering with subsistence hunting, fishing or trapping activities on *federal* public lands. The notice outlining this provision stated that the Federal Subsistence Board would use that authority only sparingly, and in close cooperation with state officials. For example, in Katie John's case, if she and her family were unable to harvest enough salmon to meet their subsistence needs because too many salmon were being caught downriver, the Federal Subsistence Board would have the authority to restrict the downriver harvest to ensure (continued)

Key Subsistence Terms

Alaska's issues surrounding subsistence rights call for very specific definitions. The Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act of 1980, Section 803, describes some important words used in the subsistence regulations:

Subsistence uses are the customary and traditional uses by rural Alaska residents of wild, renewable resources for direct personal or family consumption as food, shelter, fuel, clothing, tools or transportation; for the making and selling of handicraft articles out of nonedible byproducts of fish and wildlife resources taken for personal or family consumption; for barter or sharing for personal family consumption; and for customary trade.

Family means all persons related by blood, marriage or adoption, or any person living within the household on a permanent basis.

Barter means the exchange of fish or wildlife or their parts, taken for subsistence uses: a) for other fish or game or their parts; or b) for other food or for nonedible items other than money if the exchange is of a limited and noncommercial nature.

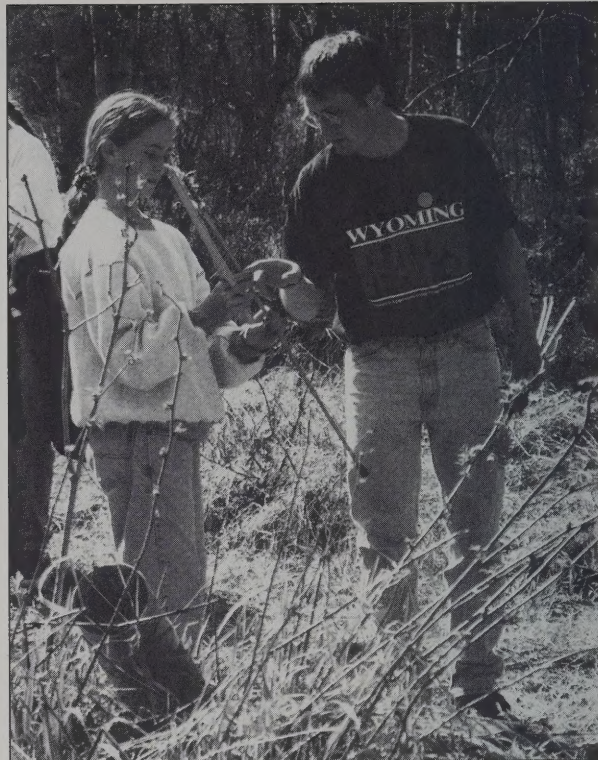
that an adequate number of salmon migrated through Katie John's fishing area.

PUBLIC LANDS NOT YET CONVEYED TO STATE AND NATIVE OWNERSHIP

Under the federal plan, federal land and resource management agencies would take control of the subsistence harvest of fish and wildlife within the boundaries of designated federal management areas on federal land selected by, but not yet conveyed to, state and Native ownership. The federal government is responsible for managing those lands until the title has been conveyed to the owner.

The 10 public hearings in urban and rural communities throughout Alaska offered an early opportunity to comment on what the federal government is considering before regulation changes are formally proposed.

—Sharon Durgan Wilson



Janet Malone

Jon Deininger shows a local sixth-grade student how to throw a spear using an atlatl, during Outdoor Week at BLM's Anchorage District Office.

The Resource Apprenticeship Program for Students is a public, non-profit program to educate primarily Native youth about careers available in natural resource management.

Each year RAPS coordinators search for funding sources, but these days of shrinking budgets make the job increasingly more difficult, says RAPS coordinator Jonathan Deininger.

"This is a real interesting year. Out of the three years I've been here, it's the toughest one I've seen," says Deininger. "This year we started at the end of June instead of at the beginning because of delays in funding. And it's safe to say that there definitely won't be as much funding available as in previous years.

"Downsizing in the government has also affected the program—there aren't as many people able to mentor students this summer. The government is cutting back and people don't have time to work with the students.

"But even with things the way they are we're hoping to have 25 to 30 students participate in the program this summer."

—Janet Malone

New RAPS coordinator comes on board

Carrie Agibinik is the new coordinator for the Resource Apprenticeship Program for Students. She is replacing Jon Deininger, who has been with the program for the last three years. Carrie comes from the Human Resources Department at the Alyeska Pipeline Service Company, where she will continue to work part time.

Carrie spends half her days at BLM and the other half at Alyeska. Her job at BLM was created through Alyeska's reverse loanee program. Through the program, Alyeska employees are given opportunities to work outside the company to develop skills they wouldn't ordinarily learn through their regular jobs.

Coming from the village of Unalakleet gives Carrie insight into how tough it can be for rural Native youth to find jobs in their village communities.

Alyeska's corporate headquarters in Anchorage is a far cry from the village of Unalakleet where Carrie Agibinik grew up. Her mother moved her and her six brothers and sisters to Anchorage when Carrie was in the fifth grade.

"My mom moved here in the mid-60s. My dad had died of cancer and she had seven kids. In Unalakleet, there were only two choices for high school: older kids could go to the Christian Covenant School which was expensive, or they had to go away to Mt. Edgcomb High School in Sitka.

"Our home had no running water. My mom cooked on a wood stove and we had propane heat. She needed help getting water from the river, but with the older kids away at Edgcomb it was very hard for her. She moved to Anchorage so the older kids could stay home and help. And there was running water here."

"There were as many people in my new school as there were people in my village. The school itself was a city compared to where I grew up.

"In most villages or smaller towns, there's very little in terms of available housing and jobs. If you go to the store, the manager has

been there for 30 years; the same with the post office. There aren't many opportunities for jobs. People pick someone locally that they know will stay.

"I enjoy working with people. I really like working in human resources, even though there are days when you wonder why you like it.

"I'm looking forward to working with students and people who have a different work background than I'm used to. Most of my experience at Alyeska has been within the equal employment or affirmative action programs, and I'm looking forward to learning something different.

"The RAPS program will give me an opportunity to work with students. I'm looking forward to that. The part of the job that worries me is the funding. Any organization that has to depend on funding has to be worrying about the shrinking money available."

"I want to stay in Anchorage. My daughter is a freshman at the University of Alaska Anchorage. And my mom lives with me. She's 81 years old. All of her children and grand-children are here in Anchorage. Everything she needs is more accessible here.

—Janet Malone

"In most villages or smaller towns, there's very little in terms of available housing and jobs. If you go to the store, the manager has been there for 30 years; the same with the post office. There aren't many opportunities for jobs."

— Carrie Agibinik

Carter Spit is for the birds!

Research shows variety of wildlife on western Alaska peninsula



Bruce Seppi

Crewmember Louie Dombroski looks through the tripod while Jeff Mason scans the scene through binoculars. Their boat is anchored in the bay. Carter Spit, the narrow finger of land that creates the 3-mile-wide Carter Bay, can be seen in the distance.

The engine of the floatplane roared into takeoff. As the plane eased into the air, Bruce Seppi looked out over Carter Spit filled with birds and felt deeply satisfied. It was August 1994.

Seppi, wildlife biologist for the Bureau of Land Management, Anchorage District Office, and three volunteers had spent six weeks at Carter Spit in western Alaska. Their objective was to conduct a baseline count of birds and species that use the Carter Spit tidal habitat.

The expected species were all there, such as western sandpipers and dunlins, but the crew discovered surprises, too. More than 50,000 western sandpipers and 8,000 dunlins were tallied. Long distance neo-tropical migrants, the Hudsonian Godwit and Bristle-Thighed Curlew, were present in numbers previously unheard of. That year the crew counted more than 80,000 birds and 118 species. Returning in 1995, Seppi and crew stayed longer into the fall migration, recording even higher numbers and 127 species.

Situated between Goodnews Bay in the south and Jacksmith Bay in the north, Carter Spit

creates a bay five miles long and three miles wide. Tidal effects within the bay are extreme. Emptying the whole of Carter Bay in a few rushing minutes, the exiting water leaves a sea of thick, oozy mud vital for many species of shorebirds.

The tides can prove treacherous, as Seppi and crew discovered early in the first survey. Returning to the bay after counting birds offshore, they became stranded in miles of mud after miscalculating the speed of the exiting tide. They tried pulling and pushing the boat, then just walking to shore. With each step the thick goop threatened to suck the boots off their feet. Finally, they made it to dry land, but this proved to be the first of many unique difficulties transporting the inflatable boat to navigable waters. When Seppi returned in 1995, he brought detachable wheels for the boat to ease dragging it over mud, land and gravel.

The birds that come to Alaska to breed and raise their young, winter all over the world. The Bristle-Thighed Curlew, for example, is from the Tahiti Islands. The Arctic Tern is from Antarctica, and the Hudsonian Godwit from Asia. Once listed as an accidental visitor to Alaska, hundreds of Hudsonian Godwits were recorded by the crew both years. Seppi stresses the importance of documenting the godwits in each survey since this supports the conviction that their presence is a regular occurrence, not accidental.

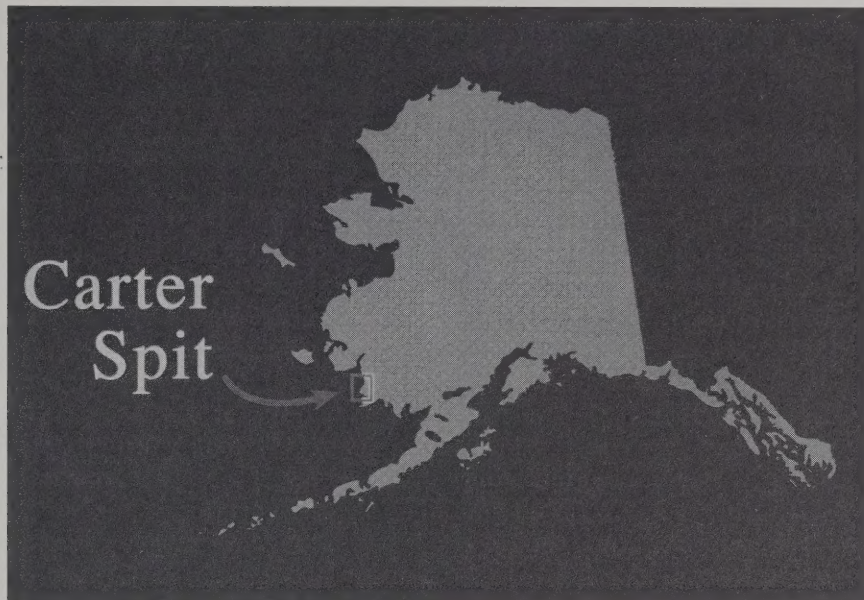
The crew enjoyed watching the acrobatic Long-Tailed Jaegers, noting their magnificent flying abilities. Seppi wrote in his journal, "We often watched them soaring effortlessly along the coast and inshore tundra, even during storms with very high winds (up to 50 mph). They often would fly in and approach us from great distances, flying within feet of our heads, seemingly to check us out."

Birds are only one indicator of the health of an ecosystem. Carter Spit and the surrounding area support many wildlife species. Moose, caribou, grizzly bear and red fox are present, and the streams are full of fish. The vital role Carter Spit plays in the spring and fall migrations, and also summer nesting grounds, is now clear. Although no new surveys are planned, the 1994 and 1995 baseline studies give a standard for measuring the health of the ecosystem and the species that use it.

—Pam Eldridge

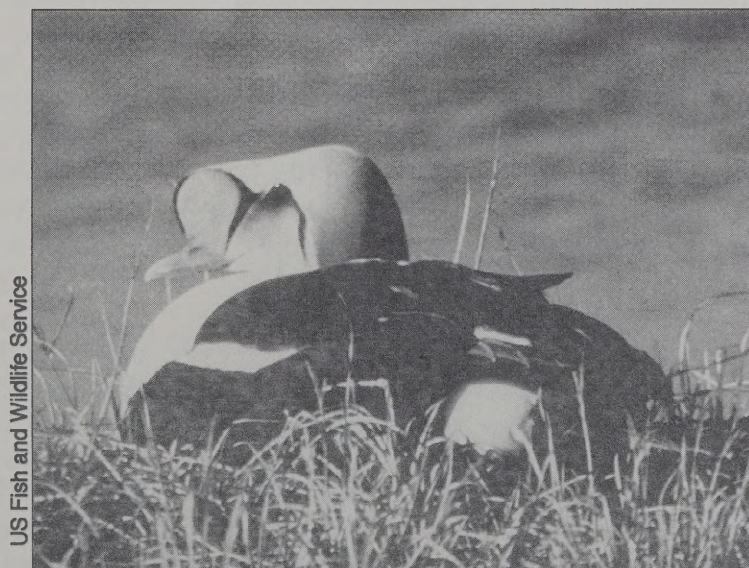
Species observed in Carter Spit

Glaucous Gull
 Black-legged Kittiwake
 Arctic Tern
 Aleutian Tern
 Common Murre
 Pigeon Guillemot
 Parakeet Auklet
 Horned Puffin
 Tufted Puffin
 Golden Eagle
 Bald Eagle
 Northern Harrier
 Sharp-shinned Hawk
 Rough-legged Hawk
 Merlin
 Peregrine Falcon
 Gyrfalcon
 Rock Ptarmigan
 Willow Ptarmigan
 Short-eared Owl
 Alder Flycatcher
 Horned Lark
 Cliff Swallow
 Common Raven
 Northern Shrike
 White-crowned Sparrow
 Lapland Longspur
 Snow Bunting
 Red Crossbill
 Hoary Redpoll
 Common Loon
 Pacific Loon
 Red-throated Loon
 Red-necked Grebe
 Horned Grebe
 Double-crested Cormorant
 Pelagic Cormorant
 Sandhill Crane
 Tundra Swan
 Snow Goose
 Emperor Goose
 Green-winged Teal
 Eurasian Wigeon
 King Eider



Louie Dombroski

In 1995 Bruce Seppi brought detachable wheels to aid transporting the inflatable zodiac boat across rough terrain. Here, Seppi pulls the boat while volunteer Rick Knight pushes.



US Fish and Wildlife Service

A solitary King Eider at rest in sedge. Two other eiders also use the Spit area: Steller's Eider and the Spectacled Eider. The Steller's Eider is on the endangered species list; the Spectacled Eider is on the threatened species list.

REINVENTING GOVERNMENT

New ideas could
save taxpayers
money while saving
time

BLM-Alaska's Reinvention lab. Front row, l-r: Associate BLM State Director Sally Wisely, Dugan Nielsen, Kamilah Rasheed, and Greg Balen. Middle row: Carol Shobe, Ramona Chin, Anchorage District Manager Nick Douglas, Glenda Miller, Allyson Johnson, Steve Flippen. Back row: Robert Rinehart, Deputy State Director Brenda Zenan, Deputy State Director George Oviatt, Brenda Takes Horse, Jane Angvik, Douglas Haywood, and Ron Royer. Absent is Tom Hawkins and the lab's sponsor, BLM State Director Tom Allen.



Teresa McPherson

On March 3, 1993, President Clinton announced a 6-month review of the federal government which later became known as the National Performance Review. The resulting report challenged the government to cut red tape and get back to basics. In response, the Department of the Interior approved reinvention laboratories as a new means to revamp government procedures and allow innovative input from employees and customers.

The Alaska Land Transfer Reinvention Laboratory—its lengthy name belies its mission: to simplify and shorten BLM-Alaska's land transfer process. Although improvements have been made in the past to the land transfer process, the kind of radical changes needed have never been realized.

The lab was chartered on May 9, 1996, and is expected to last approximately six months. It's composed of a Reinvention Team and a Project Review Board. The Team consists of seven BLM employees at various levels of the organization, plus a

representative for the State and one for Native interests. The Board is comprised of BLM managers, and State, federal and Native representatives.

The goal of the lab is to redesign the conveyance process so that 95% of the currently pending applications for Native allotments are resolved within six years, claims made under the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act within eight years, and land claims by the State of Alaska under the Statehood Act within 12 years. BLM has estimated that under its current program it would take 12 years to complete the majority of the Native allotments.

Ron Royer, a conveyances land law examiner for BLM-Alaska, describes their process. "We start with a blank page. We don't assume anything has to be done a certain way or done the way it was in the past. You have to question everything. By 'macro-mapping' the current process, we can potentially get rid of 75 per cent of the steps. We consider whether each step is 'value-added'—does it do anything that contributes to a better product? If not, get rid of it. Later comes a draft imple-

mentation plan as well as a transition plan."

"Right now we're gathering data and seeing what information we need," says Greg Balen, a cadastral geologist.

Allyson Johnson, a conveyances land law examiner adds, "We've been having speakers come in and we've gotten extremely good input from people involved in the land transfer process. We see our effort as a way to build on the expertise of people before us."

"Congress never intended for the land transfer program to be a permanent process," Balen says. "It's not like we said a long time ago, 'Let's make this as complicated as we can and let's make it last as long as we can.' People made decisions to do things a certain way for a good reason at the time."

Bob Rinehart, a BLM reality specialist echoes the need for change. "We can't do things the same way, only working harder. We have to change the way we're doing things."

Royer says approximately half of all Native allotments have been completed. "We're doing things right, it's just taking too long. It's the process that's broken. The best people to fix it are the ones involved in it—the people who've been banging their heads against the wall. We aren't making the changes ourselves. We want to sell the lab to others because things won't be any better if all the other employees don't believe in the plan."

Balen agrees. "This isn't our lab—it's BLM's. Everybody needs to be on board. There are eight people in the room only because you can't get anything done with 300 people in a room. People get nervous and feel threatened when confronted with the possibility of a big change, and this lab will result in a major change in how things are done in BLM. We aren't just slapping it on them, thinking, 'Okay, this think tank is done.'"

Johnson said one person they talked to described a successful conclusion to the conveyance process for BLM. "She defined our ultimate goal as 'equitable finality'—all cases will be resolved through due process and there won't be any more involvement with BLM."

Meeting the lab goals by only half could result in an overall savings of up to \$5 million. In fact, an executive review determined that the cost of not pursuing major reengineering of the land transfer process may far exceed what it would cost to do it.

—Janet Malone

So how big of a job are we talking here?

The Native Allotment Act of 1906 allotted up to 160 acres of non-mineral land in Alaska to individual Indians, Aleuts and Eskimos. Approximately 10,000 applications were filed under this act, representing about 16,000 individual parcels.

The Native Allotment Act was repealed by the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act of 1971, which established 13 regional Native corporations. Under ANCSA, the corporations were to receive \$962.5 million and 44 million acres of land. So far, the corporations have received patent to 11 million acres, while an additional 26 million acres have been interimly conveyed (granting rights, title and interest before the necessary survey is completed).

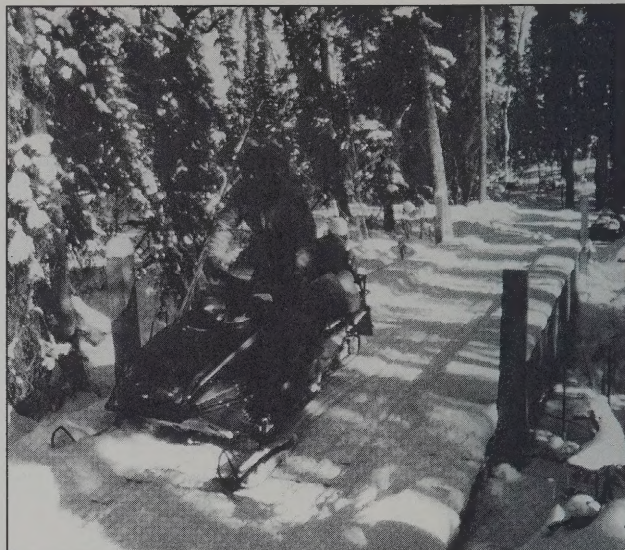
The Alaska Statehood Act, passed in 1958, entitled the State to 104.5 million acres of land. To date, the State has received patent to 37 million acres of surveyed land, and tentative approval (same grant as interim conveyance to Native land) to 51 million acres.

Native allotments usually represent individual holdings surrounded by lands claimed by the State, or by ANCSA village or regional corporations. Because of this, the determination of what lands will ultimately be conveyed to the State and ANCSA entities is heavily dependent on the disposition of Native allotment applications.

Until BLM can process the more than 6,500 remaining Native allotment parcels, it will be difficult to bring the State and ANCSA corporations to their full legal entitlements.

New bridge built on Windy Creek Trail

A snowmachiner crosses the new bridge built by BLM crews on the Windy Creek Trail in the White Mountains National Recreation Area, north of Fairbanks.



Andy Williams

Bureau of Land Management crews solved a major problem recently by replacing a temporary bridge that had partially collapsed and become a safety hazard on Windy Creek Trail. The bridge is located about 23 miles from the trailhead at Mile 57 of the Elliott Highway in the White Mountains.

"The temporary bridge structure was built by an Alaska Fire Service fire crew in 1989," says Randy Goodwin, outdoor recreation planner with BLM's Northern District. "It was a log structure made of native materials. It lasted about five years, but was washed out by high waters last year."

Goodwin says one end of the bridge collapsed and snowmachiners were going down into the creek to get around it. The route was hazardous and the traffic was eroding the banks.

Randy Goodwin said crews used a helicopter to sling-load the materials into the area last summer. They assembled the bridge on site in March.

"As a completely engineered bridge, this one is much more efficient," Goodwin says. "It's made from treated all-weather wood and should easily be a 50-year bridge."

Plywood box beams form the main part of the 36-foot-long bridge. The beams had three 2-by-12-inch boards on top and three on the bottom, with two layers of plywood on each side.

"The main design criteria was to create a bridge made of small pieces that could be built in the field, using mostly hand tools," says BLM engineer Curtis Fortenberry, who designed the bridge. "Bringing in pre-fabricated beams by helicopter would be much too expensive. By transporting smaller pieces and then laminating them in the field, we saved money."

Fortenberry says this is the largest bridge BLM crews have built to date. "It's quite a feat. It definitely earns them a bridge-building merit badge."

—Andy Williams

White Mountains— escape to a beautiful winter wilderness

Winter travel in the White Mountains is a breathtaking experience for dog mushers, cross-country skiers and snow machiners. The Bureau of Land Management maintains approximately 200 miles of winter trails in the million-acre White Mountains National Recreation Area it manages for public use.

The area has become a favorite recreation destination since it is near Fairbanks, lying between the Elliott and Steese highways. People enjoy the scenery and solitude during day trips, and many stay overnight at one of the public recreation cabins BLM maintains along the trails.

Boggy terrain laced with myriad streams presents problems to travelers in the summer. Most of the trails are closed to motorized vehicles during months when the ground is not frozen.

BLM maintains the trails throughout the winter. Cabins rent for \$20 per night on Friday and Saturday nights, and \$15 a night all other nights. Reservations can be made through the BLM Public Room at 1150 University Ave., Fairbanks, AK 99709, or by telephone at (907) 474-2250.

Glennallen District seeks to salvage timber

A team of resource professionals is pulling together to produce a timber salvage sale in the Glennallen District, to be put out for public bid during the summer of 1996.

BLM state forester Mike Zaidlicz, team leader for the project, notes, "The effort is a cooperative one with the State of Alaska Department of Natural Resources, where BLM provides the overall planning and funding while DNR provides the manpower."

DNR area forester Martin Maricle says, "I'm really glad that we've been able to participate, and that BLM set up this cooperative agreement. It's an excellent way to share resources, and has given us the opportunity to observe how a large scale assessment is done. We hope to apply what we've been learning to future state sales."

Maricle has led a team of nearly a dozen foresters, forestry technicians, and administrative personnel employed by the State in the Glennallen region to gather data. BLM staff will use the data to develop an environmental analysis and harvest plan. They'll review the sale contract that BLM will develop, and recommend stipulations that they have found useful for state sales in the area. Once the sale is awarded to the successful bidder, Maricle and his staff will continue to assist with local administration of contract requirements.

More than 5 million cubic feet of dead spruce timber, located on more than 4,000 acres of land between Glennallen and Valdez, along the Richardson Highway near the Trans-Alaska Pipeline, are involved, making this one of the largest timber sales ever offered by BLM in Alaska.

Observes Zaidlicz, "Salvaging the dead and dying timber in this area is designed to regenerate a new healthy timber stand while removing a potential fire hazard, thereby improving the health of the land."

—KJ Mushovic

Council represents public interests



The BLM Alaska Resource Advisory Council—Front row l-r: Council Chair Joan Travostino, Carol Kasza and Trish Berg. Middle row: Ron Ricketts, Kathy Mayo, Tina Lindgren and Allen Smith. Back row: Brad Meiklejohn, Eleanor Huffines, Dan Ritzman, Hank Bartos and Tom Hawkins. Not pictured: Walter Sampson.

The BLM uses many tools to stay in touch with the needs of our customers. One of those tools is the Alaska Resource Advisory Council. The 13-member council was formed last fall to provide advice and recommendations to BLM on the use and management of nearly 90 million acres of public lands in Alaska.

"The citizens of Alaska are best served if a full range of interests are represented when land management decisions are made," says State Director Tom Allen. "The council gives local stakeholders a seat at the table and a sound process for effective participation in these decisions."

The council includes a balanced representation of industry and recreation interests; conservation and environmental interests; and elected officials, Alaska Natives and the public-at-large. Council members serve a two-year term, and meet about four times a year.

Currently the council is looking at BLM's management of the Fortymile Wild and Scenic River. Four members of the council toured the area in late June and met with local residents who mine or have recreational interests on the river. They will meet with the full council in September to share the information and discuss possible recommendations for BLM.

—Teresa McPherson

The Bureau of Land Management is asking Alaska Native corporations throughout the state to help identify the presence of contaminants on lands received under the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act.

A law passed in November 1995 requires the Secretary of the Interior to prepare a report to Congress regarding contaminants on lands conveyed or scheduled to be conveyed to Alaska Native corporations. Detailed information packets were mailed to all village and regional corporations asking for their cooperation in identifying known contaminated sites.

Site reports should be returned to BLM by September 13, 1996. BLM will consolidate the information and forward a comprehensive report to the Secretary by March 1997. The Secretary will review and forward a final report to Congress by May 1997.

Suspected contaminated sites could include buildings with friable (easily crumbled or reduced to powder) asbestos, fuel tanks,

oil and gas wells, landfills, mines, and water treatment and power plants.

"We understand some landowners may be reluctant to provide detailed information on the existence of contaminated sites due to concerns over potential liabilities," said BLM state Director Tom Allen, "but these problems can't be addressed without a comprehensive inventory of some kind. It's our intention to forward whatever information we can obtain to Congress for their consideration and appropriate action."



A final rule has been published by the BLM that allows some agency general land-use permit decisions to take effect immediately and remain in effect during the time allowed for filing an administrative appeal to the Interior Board of Land Appeals.

The rule, which deals only with the matter of appeals of BLM

decisions to issue general land-use authorizations, is aimed at resolving a controversy that arose over the issuance of filming permits on BLM-managed public lands. It allows permits that meet minimum environmental impact standards on public land resources to be issued expeditiously. The use must not cause appreciable damage or disturbance to resources or improvements on the public lands.

All leases, along with permits that *do not* meet the minimum-impact standard, will become effective only after a 30-day appeals period, and will not take effect during the IBLA's consideration of any appeal.

The new rule will streamline the BLM's process of issuing leases and permits, saving time and money, and benefiting commercial users of public lands and taxpayers as well.

A subsequent final rule, expected to be published later this year, will simplify the application process for general leases and permits.



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